

Fulbright's Forces Fighting to Keep

Policy Curb on White House

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The Senate Foreign Relations Committee, admittedly on the defensive in its struggle with the White House, will make a last-ditch effort this week to preserve some foreign policy restrictions on the executive branch.

The last few weeks have been discouraging for the committee members who champion a Congressional role in the formulation of foreign policy.

First President Nixon said that he would ignore a provision in the military procurement law stating it to be United States policy to withdraw all its forces promptly from Indochina, subject only to the release of American prisoners of war.

Committee Divided

The provision—probably the most emphatic statement yet adopted by Congress in seeking to impose a foreign policy on the Nixon Administration—was largely the work of members of the Foreign Relations Committee, particularly of the Senate majority leader Mike Mansfield.

But when it came to defending it against the President, the committee members last week were divided. They were unwilling to offer an amendment to the Defense Appropriations bill that would have cut off funds

unless the withdrawal policy was carried out.

The struggle now shifts to the foreign-aid legislation, with the Administration once again apparently having the upper hand as time runs out on this Congressional session.

Conferees of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and of the House Foreign Affairs Committee will meet tomorrow to see whether they can reconcile differences between legislation passed by the House and by the Senate. Controversy is likely over the money differences—the two Senate bills provide \$2.6-billion in foreign aid and the single bill passed by the House 3.4-billion—and also over the foreign-policy restrictions that the Senate wrote into the legislation.

There is considerable doubt that the conferees will be able to resolve their differences in the week or so remaining in the Congressional session. If they cannot, the Senate provisions will probably be abandoned as Congress passes a simple resolution extending the spending authority for the foreign-aid program.

Senator J. W. Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, sees the Administration maneuvering in that direction. He believes that the President would be willing to scrap any foreign aid legislation, even if that means a lower level of foreign-aid spending, to get rid of restrictive

policy provisions passed by the Senate.

If that happens, Senator Fulbright says, it will be a "serious institutional setback" for the Senate in its efforts to redress the balance of power between the executive branch and Congress in the formulation of foreign policy.

Senator Fulbright spelled out his fears in a recent letter to Senator Allen J. Ellender, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee. Copies of the letter were sent to several of Senator Fulbright's Democratic colleagues on the Foreign Relations Committee who will be participating in the foreign-aid conference.

Provisions in Danger

Senator Fulbright expressed doubt that in the few days remaining the conferees would be able to resolve their differences and come up with an authorization bill. He foresaw the Administration at that point "applying all the pressure it can" to secure Congressional adoption of a simple continuing resolution authorizing continued foreign aid spending for the remainder of this fiscal year, which ends next June 30.

Senator Fulbright listed the following among the policy provisions that would be abandoned if a continuing resolution were approved:

¶An amendment, sponsored by Senator Mansfield, establishing the policy that the United

States withdraw all its forces from Indochina in six months, subject to the release of American prisoners of war.

¶A requirement that the President release impounded funds for domestic programs before allocating money for similar purposes in the foreign-aid program.

¶Provisions shifting much of the economic aid from a bilateral to a multilateral basis.

¶Language placing a ceiling on economic and military aid to Cambodia.

¶A requirement that the

State Department receive an annual authorization for its budget, thus making it more responsive to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

To give up such policy provisions, Senator Fulbright wrote, "would be unfortunate because they represent a vigorous effort on the part of the Senate to exert a significant influence on foreign policy and to begin to redress the balance of power that has swung toward the President."